

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 6535

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 8728

LIMDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

FOR AMBASSADOR KUBISCH FROM STEARNS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR GR

SUBJECT: FM BITSIOS STATEMENT RE U.S. AID TO TURKEY

1. SUMMARY: FM BITSIOS ISSUED PRESS STATEMENT DECEMBER 7 CONCERNING GOG POSITION ON EXTENSION OF U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO TURKEY. ANDREAS PAPANDREOU RELEASED BRIEF STATEMENT AFTERWARDS IN WHICH HE ASKS IF GOG IS PLANNING TO ASK FOR RECALL OF AMBASSADOR KUBISCH. RADIO/TV AND NEWSPAPERS HAVE REPORTED WIDELY BOTH RELEASES. END SUMMARY.

2. FM BITSIOS RELEASED OFFICIAL STATEMENT TO PRESS CORPS MIDDAY DECEMBER 7 WHICH WAS WIDELY REPORTED ON RADIO - TV AND IN ALL ATHENIANS NEWSPAPERS DECEMBER 8. TEXT OF STATEMENT: QTE: THE ISSUE OF HALTING MILITARY AID TO TURKEY FOR VIOLATING IN CYPRUS THE U.S. LAW CONCERNING THE USE OF SUCH AID IS BEING FOLLOWED WITH PARTICULAR INTEREST BY THE GREEK GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER MUCH ITS SETTLEMENT DEPENDS ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND CONGRESS. HOWEVER, THE ALLEGATION THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSENT TO THE GRANTING OF SUCH AID EXTENSION

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IN INCONCEIVABLE. WHEN ON AUGUST 14 AMERICAN ARMS WERE USED FOR THE OCCUPATION OF 40 PERCENT OF CYPRIOT TERRITORY AND

PLUNGED CYPRUS IN TO DESPAIR, THE GREEK GOVERNMENT DEMONSTRATED HOW IT FACED THE ISSUE BY DECIDING ON GREECE'S WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO'S MILITARY WING. WITH THE SAME INDIGNATION IT REJECTS THAT WHICH IS RUMORED IN THE AMERICAN CAPITAL AND REFUSES TO ANY FOREIGNER THE RIGHT OF INTERPRETING ITS ATTITUDE AND POLICY. END QTE.

3. PANHELLENIC SOCIALIST MOVEMENT PRESIDENT, ANDREAS PAPANDREOU, ISSUED RELEASE SUBSEQUENTLY IN CONNECTION WITH FM BITSIOS' STATEMENT. QTE FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS CORRECTLY STATED THE GENERAL PRINCIPLE THAT THE GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO ANY FOREIGN THE RIGHT TO INTERPRET ITS STAND AND POLICY. HOWEVER, MR. KUBISCH IS NOT SIMPLY A FOREIGNER. HE IS ACCREDITED TO THE GREEK GOVERNMENT AS AMBASSADOR OF U.S.A. IS THE GOVERNMENT PLANNING TO ASK FOR HIS RECALL? END QTE. PAPANDREOU'S STATEMENT IS REPORTED AS WELL IN ALL MORNING NEWSPAPERS UNDER SAME CAPTION WITH REPORTAGE OF FM BITSIOS' STATEMENT.

PRESS CAPTIONS AS FOLLOWS:

AKROPOLIS (BACKPAGE) "GREECE ASKS TO HALT U.S. AID TOWARD TURKEY" -- "AMERICAN ARMS USED FOR THE INVASION OF CYPRUS; KAHTIMERINI (BACKPAGE) "GREEK GOVERNMENT DENIES TO ANY FOREIGN WHATSOEVER THE RIGHT TO INTERPRET ITS POLICY;" TO VIMA (FRONTPAGE) "NO CONSENT FOR AID TO TURKEY; "ELEFTHEROS COSMOS (FRONTPAGE) "STATEMENT OF AMERICAN AMBASSADOR KUBISCH UNACCEPTABLE;" AVGHI (BACKPAGE) "MR. KUBISCH TO WITHDRAW." NO EDITORIAL COMMENT HAS BEEN PUBLISHED.

4. CHARGE'S COMMENT: WHAT THIS EPISODE DEMONSTRATES IS (A) THAT GREEK POLITICAL LIFE IS RAPIDLY GETTING BACK TO "NORMAL" AND (B) THAT DESPITE ITS RECENT ELECTORAL VICTORY GOG IS STILL UNDULY SENSITIVE TO ATTACKS BY PAPANDREOU, AS THEY SHOWED RECENTLY WHEN HE CRITICIZED GREEK VOTE ON PLO AT UNGA. I THINK MFA MADE TACTICAL MISTAKE IN RESPONDING TO PAPANDREOU IN THIS INSTANCE, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE EMBASSY DENIAL OF PRESS REPORTS HAD BEEN WIDELY AND PROMINENTLY REPORTED, AND PAPANDREOU HAS SEIZED THE OPPORTUNITY TO RENEW PRESSURE ON THE GOVT. NEVEREAESS, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A FLASH IN THE PAN ISSUE AND THAT WE SHOULD KEEP OUR COOL AND NOT ISSUE ANY NEW STATEMENTS THAT WOULD PROLONG THE DEBATE. BITSIOS AND PAPANDREOU'S STATEMENTS ARE BEING PLAYED IN FAIRLY LOW KEY AND PLEBISCITE AND
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MAKARIOS ARE STILL THE MAIN CENTER OF PRESS ATTENTION.09

5. I SHALL GET TO TZOUNIS AS SOON AS HE IS REACHABLE AND REPEAT WHAT I TOLD HIM FRIDAY, ADDING THE DETAILS YOU PROVIDED ON SATURDAY. IF I SEE BITSIOS AT OPENING OF PARLIAMENT MONDAY AND THERE IS APPROPRIATE MOMENT TO DO SO, I SHALL ALSO TALK TO HIM. MEANWHILE, SINCE YOU WILL BE SEEING HIM EARLY IN THE WEEK IN BRUSSELS, THERE SHOULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO COVER THE GROUND WITH HIM PERSONALLY. BY THEN I HOPE AND BELIEVE THE STORY WILL BE DEAD, ALTHOUGH WE WILL BE ALERT TO THE POSSIBILITY THAT

PAPANDREOU WILL TRY TO REVIVE IT WHEN PARLIAMENT BEGINS REGULAR
DEBATE NEXT WEEK.
STEARNS

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